

Message Text

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12
ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 OES-06 H-02 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 INR-07 L-03

EB-07 /053 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/INS:RFOBER,JR.:SLB
APPROVED BY NEA/INS:DKUX
OES:DCOOPER (SUBS)
H:SGOLDBERG (INFO)

----- 027078

R 060213Z AUG 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 195163

STADIS/////////////////
FOR TEHRAN, PASS KRATZER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, IN

SUBJECT: TARAPUR MISCELLANEOUS

1. THE SECRETARY'S RESPONSE TO SENATOR RIBICOFF'S LETTER OF JUNE 16 CONCERNING THE U.S. SUPPLY OF HEAVY WATER TO INDIA WAS APPROVED AND SENT AUGUST 2. FULL TEXT READS AS FOLLOWS. QUOTE. DEAR SENATOR RIBICOFF,
 2. THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF JUNE 16, RAISING A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE U.S. SUPPLY OF HEAVY WATER TO INDIA. I AM IN FULL AGREEMENT WITH YOU THAT THIS REPRESENTS A MATTER OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO OUR NON-PROLIFERATION POLICY, BOTH WITH RESPECT TO INDIA AND OTHER NATIONS.
 3. YOUR LETTER RAISED SEVERAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING AMBAS-
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SADOR MCCLOSKEY'S RESPONSE TO YOUR EARLIER LETTER ON THIS

MATTER, AND IN PARTICULAR, THE INFORMATION WHICH WAS SUPPLIED CONCERNING THE POSSIBLE LOSS AND REPLACEMENT OF U.S.-SUPPLIED HEAVY WATER. AS A RESULT OF YOUR INQUIRY, I DIRECTED THAT THERE BE A THOROUGH REVIEW OF EARLIER STAFF ESTIMATES. THIS REVIEW ESTABLISHES THAT IN EARLIER EFFORTS THE PREVIOUSLY INDICATED HEAVY WATER LOSS RATE AND CERTAIN RELATED CALCULATIONS WERE INCORRECT. CONSEQUENTLY, THERE IS HIGH PROBABILITY--BECAUSE OF INDIA'S PRACTICE OF COMINGLING HEAVY WATER--THAT SOME U.S. HEAVY WATER REMAINED IN THE CIRUS REACTOR DURING THE PERIOD IN QUESTION. WE NEVERTHELESS DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION TO CONCLUSIVELY ESTABLISH THAT SUCH HEAVY WATER WAS PRESENT AT ALL TIMES AFTER 1965. A FULL STATEMENT OF OUR CURRENT BEST UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION IS CONTAINED IN THE ATTACHED STAFF ANALYSIS. THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION HAS BEEN PROVIDED WITH THIS INFORMATION.

4. THE KEY FACTORS IN THIS MATTER, IN OUR VIEW, ARE THAT BY 1965 INDIA HAD PRODUCED UNSAFEGUARDED HEAVY WATER IN ITS OWN NANGAL HEAVY WATER PLANT IN EXCESS OF THAT NEEDED TO REPLACE THE HEAVY WATER SUPPLIED BY THE U.S. FOR THE CIRUS REACTOR. THEREAFTER, INDIAN SUPPLIES OF NANGAL-PRODUCED HEAVY WATER CONTINUED TO INCREASE SO THAT BY 1974 IT HAD PRODUCED SEVERAL-FOLD THE CIRUS REQUIREMENTS. THUS, U.S. HEAVY WATER WAS NOT ESSENTIAL TO THE PRODUCTION OF PLUTONIUM FOR INDIA'S 1974 NUCLEAR TEST, AND OUR RESPONSE TO THE INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST TOOK THIS IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION INTO ACCOUNT.

5. NONETHELESS, OUR DISPLEASURE WITH THE TEST WAS MADE KNOWN TO THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT, AND SUBSEQUENTLY, EXPORT LICENSES FOR NUCLEAR FUEL SHIPMENTS TO THE TARAPUR ATOMIC POWER STATION WERE WITHHELD UNTIL SATISFACTORY REASSURANCE WAS OBTAINED THAT THE CONTINUED SUPPLY OF NUCLEAR FUEL FROM THE U.S. WOULD NOT CONTRIBUTE TO INDIA'S NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE PROGRAM.

6. DURING MY VISIT TO INDIA IN OCTOBER, 1974, I PUBLICLY CITED OUR STRONG OPPOSITION TO PROLIFERATION AND WARNED OF ITS INHIBITING EFFECTS ON COOPERATION IN PEACEFUL USES OF

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NUCLEAR ENERGY. IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR, I REITERATED MY OPPOSITION TO THE INDIAN DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE DEVICES IN MY TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE, WHEN I SAID IN PART "...WE DEPLORE IT STRONGLY, AND WE HAVE MADE CLEAR TO INDIA THAT WE SAW NO NEED FOR IT..." I ALSO STATED THAT "... A CONTINUATION OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS BY INDIA WOULD BE A RECKLESS POLICY THAT WOULD UNDERMINE REGIONAL STABILITY..."

7. DURING RECENT MONTHS, IN CONNECTION WITH THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S CONSIDERATION OF TWO INDIAN EXPORT LICENSE APPLICATIONS FOR SLIGHTLY ENRICHED URANIUM, QUESTIONS WERE RAISED ANEW CONCERNING OUR CONTINUED SUPPLY OF NUCLEAR FUEL FOR THE TARAPUR REACTORS, WHICH SUPPLY HAD BEEN RESUMED FOLLOWING SATISFACTORY REASSURANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA THAT THIS MATERIAL WOULD NOT CONTRIBUTE TO ITS NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE PROGRAM, AS IS EXPLAINED IN THE ATTACHED STAFF ANALYSIS. AS A RESULT, THE ISSUANCE OF THESE LICENSES WAS DELAYED AND THE CONTINUED EFFICIENT OPERATION OF THE TARAPUR ATOMIC POWER STATION WAS JEOPARDIZED. IT WAS OUR BELIEF THAT FURTHER DELAY IN LICENSING THESE FUEL SHIPMENTS, FOR MATERIALS WHICH WE ARE LEGALLY OBLIGATED TO SUPPLY, WOULD RAISE EXTREMELY SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR OUR OVERALL RELATIONS WITH INDIA, INCLUDING THE FURTHERANCE OF OUR NON-PROLIFERATION OBJECTIVES HERE.

8. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT I ASKED AMBASSADOR SAXBE TO RETURN TO INFORM ME AND INTERESTED MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS PERSONALLY OF THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF THIS DELAY. AMBASSADOR SAXBE HAS TOLD ME OF HIS USEFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH YOU AND OTHER CONCERNED MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS, AND WE BOTH APPRECIATE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEED TO CONTINUE AN ON-GOING RELATIONSHIP AS WE REEXAMINE THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES INVOLVED. MOREOVER, I AM GRATIFIED THAT THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION NOW HAS APPROVED THE FIRST OF THE TWO ABOVE-MENTIONED EXPORT LICENSE APPLICATIONS, WHICH SHOULD ALLOW ADDITIONAL FUEL FOR THE TARAPUR STATION TO BE FABRICATED IN SUFFICIENT TIME TO PREVENT DISRUPTION OF THE INDIAN ELECTRIC POWER SUPPLY.

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9. AS WE HAVE INFORMED YOUR STAFF, WE ARE PREPARED--NOW THAT THE PUBLIC HEARINGS BEFORE THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION ON THE SECOND OF THESE INDIAN EXPORT LICENSE APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED--TO CONSULT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF OUR PEACEFUL NUCLEAR COOPERATION. IN THE MEANTIME, I AM ATTACHING FOR YOUR INFORMATION A STAFF ANALYSIS PREPARED IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONS INCLUDED IN YOUR LETTER OF JUNE 16.

10. WE APPRECIATE YOUR INTEREST IN THIS IMPORTANT MATTER, WHICH I CAN ASSURE YOU IS RECEIVING MY PERSONAL ATTENTION. UNQUOTE.

11. THE NRC ISSUED AN ORDER AUGUST 4 EXTENDING TO AUGUST

20 THE DEADLINE FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE LIST OF QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE NRC STAFF AND THE PETITIONERS JUST BEFORE THE RECENT HEARING. THE EXTENSION SHOULD HAVE NO BEARING ON THE TIMELINESS OF THE NRC CONSIDERATION OF LICENSE 845 INASMUCH AS THE NRC IS AWAITING WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH ON THE PROGRESS OF THE TALKS WITH THE INDIANS ON EXERCISING THE BUY-BACK OPTION. (DEPARTMENT HAD REQUESTED EXTENSION AUGUST 3 IN VIEW OF THE NUMBER AND COMPLEXITY OF THE QUESTIONS TO WHICH RESPONSES ARE REQUIRED).

12. WE SEE NO REASON FOR EMBASSY OR CONSULATE TO GIVE THE TEXT OF THE SECRETARY'S LETTER TO THE INDIANS UNLESS SENATOR RIBICOFF RELEASES IT AND THE ISSUE AGAIN ERUPTS AS A MATTER OF PUBLIC CONTROVERSY. HABIB

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EXPORTS, TARAPUR, HEAVY WATER, NUCLEAR REACTORS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: vogelfj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE195163
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RFOBER,JR.:SLB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760303-0269
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760877/aaaacotr.tel
Line Count: 184
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: vogelfj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 JUN 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <06 OCT 2004 by vogelfj>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TARAPUR MISCELLANEOUS
TAGS: TECH, IN
To: NEW DELHI BOMBAY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006